



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Employment Commission

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For Release: March 25, 2022

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The Virginia unemployment rate fell to 3.2 percent in February while total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 21,300

RICHMOND— Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell 0.1 of a percentage point in February to 3.2 percent, which is 1.4 percentage points below the rate from a year ago. According to household survey data in February, the labor force increased by 14,138 to 4,291,990, as the number of unemployed residents decreased by 3,330 to 136,004. The number of employed residents rose by 17,468 to 4,155,986. Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be below the national rate, which fell from 4.0 to 3.8 percent. The Commonwealth's labor force participation rate increased slightly by 0.1 of a percentage point to 63.0 percent in February. The labor force participation rate measures the proportion of the civilian population age 16 and older that is employed or actively looking for work.

Virginia nonagricultural wage and salary employment, from the monthly establishment survey, rose by 21,300 jobs in February to 4,014,900. January's preliminary estimate was revised up by 4,100, reducing that month's job loss. In February, private sector employment increased by 12,400 jobs to 3,299,700 while public sector payrolls increased by 8,900 jobs to 715,200. Much of the increase within that sector occurred in state government (+8,200 jobs), but employment also rose in local government (+1,300 jobs). Federal government employment fell by 600 jobs.

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Employment rose in nine of eleven major industry sectors and declined in two. The largest job gain during February occurred in **government** with an increase of 8,900 jobs to 715,200. The second largest increase occurred in **leisure and hospitality** (+5,000 jobs) to 393,000. **Professional and business services** gained 4,800 jobs, rising to 788,000 in February. Other increases included **construction** (+2,900 jobs) to 207,400, **trade and transportation** (+2,800 jobs) to 667,300, **miscellaneous** (+1,500 jobs) to 187,800, **manufacturing** (+1,100 jobs) to 236,200, **finance** (+200 jobs) to 207,200, and **mining** (+100 jobs) to 7,100. The largest job loss during February occurred in **education and health services** (-5,400 jobs) to 539,000. The second largest decrease occurred in **information** with a decrease of 600 jobs to 66,700.

Nonfarm Employment in Virginia* Seasonally Adjusted

Industry	Employment			January 2022 to February 2022		February 2021 to February 2022	
	February 2022	January 2022	February 2021	Change	% Change	Change	% Change
Total Nonfarm	4,014,900	3,993,600	3,903,000	21,300	0.5%	111,900	2.9%
Total Private Sector	3,299,700	3,287,300	3,200,100	12,400	0.4%	99,600	3.1%
Goods-Producing	450,700	446,600	450,600	4,100	0.9%	100	0.0%
Mining	7,100	7,000	6,900	100	1.4%	200	2.9%
Construction	207,400	204,500	205,300	2,900	1.4%	2,100	1.0%
Manufacturing	236,200	235,100	238,400	1,100	0.5%	-2,200	-0.9%
Service-Providing	3,564,200	3,547,000	3,452,400	17,200	0.5%	111,800	3.2%
Private Service-Providing	2,849,000	2,840,700	2,749,500	8,300	0.3%	99,500	3.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	667,300	664,500	651,700	2,800	0.4%	15,600	2.4%
Information	66,700	67,300	65,400	-600	-0.9%	1,300	2.0%
Finance	207,200	207,000	210,100	200	0.1%	-2,900	-1.4%
Professional and Business Services	788,000	783,200	769,700	4,800	0.6%	18,300	2.4%
Education and Health Services	539,000	544,400	533,000	-5,400	-1.0%	6,000	1.1%
Leisure and Hospitality Services	393,000	388,000	337,700	5,000	1.3%	55,300	16.4%
Miscellaneous Services	187,800	186,300	181,900	1,500	0.8%	5,900	3.2%
Government	715,200	706,300	702,900	8,900	1.3%	12,300	1.7%
Federal Government	185,400	186,000	186,700	-600	-0.3%	-1,300	-0.7%
State Government	155,200	147,000	154,200	8,200	5.6%	1,000	0.6%
Local Government	374,600	373,300	362,000	1,300	0.3%	12,600	3.5%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

From February 2021 to February 2022, the VEC estimates that establishments in Virginia gained 111,900 jobs, an increase of 2.9%. In February, the private sector recorded an over-the-year gain of 99,600 jobs, while employment in the public sector gained 12,300 jobs.

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Compared to a year ago, on a **seasonally adjusted** basis, nine of eleven major industry divisions experienced employment increases while two saw employment decreases. The largest over-the-year job gain occurred in **leisure and hospitality**, up 55,300 jobs (+16.4%). The next largest over-the-year job gain occurred in **professional and business services**, up 18,300 jobs (+2.4%). Other job gains occurred in **trade and transportation** (+15,600 jobs), **government** (+12,300 jobs), and **education and health services** (+6,000 jobs). Within government, local (+12,600 jobs) and state government (+1,000 jobs) both gained jobs over the year while federal government saw a decrease in employment (-1,300 jobs). The largest job loss during February occurred in **finance** (-2,900 jobs) to 207,200. The second largest decrease occurred in **manufacturing** with a decrease of 2,200 jobs to 236,200.

Total Nonfarm Employment in Virginia* Seasonally Adjusted

Area	Employment			January 2022 to February 2022		February 2021 to February 2022	
	February 2022	January 2022	February 2021	Change	% Change	Change	% Change
Virginia	4,014,900	3,993,600	3,903,000	21,300	0.5%	111,900	2.9%
Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford MSA	81,500	80,600	75,900	900	1.1%	5,600	7.4%
Charlottesville MSA	118,000	117,800	113,400	200	0.2%	4,600	4.1%
Harrisonburg MSA	70,100	68,200	66,300	1,900	2.8%	3,800	5.7%
Lynchburg MSA	102,900	102,800	100,800	100	0.1%	2,100	2.1%
Northern Virginia MSA	1,514,500	1,502,000	1,466,100	12,500	0.8%	48,400	3.3%
Richmond MSA	670,700	666,400	657,000	4,300	0.6%	13,700	2.1%
Roanoke MSA	159,300	158,900	157,100	400	0.3%	2,200	1.4%
Staunton-Waynesboro MSA	51,400	51,000	49,500	400	0.8%	1,900	3.8%
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, Virginia/North Carolina MSA	777,500	774,700	765,000	2,800	0.4%	12,500	1.6%
Winchester, Virginia/West Virginia MSA	69,100	68,300	66,200	800	1.2%	2,900	4.4%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment data is produced for ten metropolitan areas. In February, all ten metropolitan areas experienced over-the-month job gains. The largest absolute job increase occurred in Northern Virginia (+12,500 jobs). The next largest absolute job gain occurred in Richmond (+4,300 jobs). The third largest increase occurred in Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News (+2,800 jobs). Harrisonburg added 1,900 jobs. Other over-the-month job gains occurred in Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford (+900 jobs), Winchester (+800 jobs), Roanoke (+400 jobs), Staunton-Waynesboro (+400 jobs), Charlottesville (+200 jobs), and Lynchburg (+100 jobs).

Over-the-year, **seasonally adjusted** total nonfarm employment increased in all ten metropolitan areas. The Northern Virginia metropolitan area experienced the largest absolute job gain, up 48,400 jobs (+3.3%). Richmond ranked second, with a gain of 13,700 jobs (+2.1%). Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News ranked third, with a gain of 12,500 jobs (+1.6%). Other over-the-year job gains occurred in

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Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford (+5,600 jobs), Charlottesville (+4,600 jobs), Harrisonburg (+3,800 jobs), Winchester (+2,900 jobs), Roanoke (+2,200 jobs), Lynchburg (+2,100 jobs), and Staunton-Waynesboro (+1,900 jobs).

NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED DATA

Virginia's **unadjusted** unemployment rate decreased 0.5 of a percentage point in February to 2.9 percent. This is 1.8 percentage points lower than the rate from a year ago. Compared to a year ago, the number of unemployed decreased by 76,033, household employment increased by 121,845, and the labor force increased by 45,812. Virginia's not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be below the national unadjusted rate, which decreased by 0.3 of a percentage point in February to 4.1 percent.

Compared to last month, the February unadjusted workweek for Virginia's 152,300 manufacturing production workers increased by 0.4 hours to 40.7 hours. Average hourly earnings of private-sector production workers increased by \$.03 to \$21.63 in February and average weekly earnings increased by \$9.86 to \$880.34.

Technical note: Estimates of unemployment and industry employment levels are obtained from two separate monthly surveys. Resident employment and unemployment data are mainly derived from the Virginia portion of the national Current Population Survey (CPS), a household survey conducted each month by the U.S. Census Bureau under contract with BLS, which provides input to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program (often referred to as the "household" survey). Industry employment data is mainly derived from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, a monthly survey of approximately 18,000 Virginia businesses conducted by BLS, which provides estimates of employment, hours, and earnings data broken down by industry for the nation as a whole, all states and most major metropolitan areas (often referred to as the "establishment" survey). Both industry and household estimates are revised each month based on additional information from updated survey reports compiled by the BLS. **For national figures and information on how COVID-19 affected collection of the BLS establishment and household surveys in April 2020, refer to the BLS [February 2022 Employment Situation](#) press release for details.**

The statistical reference week for the household survey this month was the week of February 6-12, 2022.

The Virginia Employment Commission plans to release the February local area unemployment rates on Wednesday, April 6, 2022. The data will be available on our website www.VirginiaWorks.com. The March 2022 statewide unemployment rate and employment data for both the state and metropolitan areas are scheduled to be released on Friday, April 15, 2022.